



Iowa Department of Human Services

Terry E. Branstad
Governor

Kim Reynolds
Lt. Governor

Charles M. Palmer
Director

INFORMATIONAL LETTER NO.1411

DATE: August 4, 2014

TO: Iowa Medicaid Intermediate Care Facilities for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/ID)

FROM: Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (IME)

RE: Supports Intensity Scale® Assessments

EFFECTIVE: Immediately

Implementation of the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) to assess Iowa Medicaid members with intellectual disabilities will begin in August 2014. Not all members will have an assessment the first year. One-third of the members presently served in ICF/IDs will have a full SIS assessment based upon a random selection process. Facilities will be contacted to schedule interviews for persons who have been selected. All persons requesting new services will also have a SIS assessment.

The Mental Health and Disability Services (MHDS) redesign workgroup recommended implementing standard assessment instruments, specifically recommending the SIS. Senate File 446, the 2013 Health and Human Services Appropriations bill, directed the Department of Human Services (DHS) to contract with an independent entity to perform the SIS. Through a competitive bid process, Telligon, Inc. was selected as the vendor to implement core standardized assessments (CSA).

The SIS is a CSA tool used to evaluate the support needs of a person with an intellectual and/or developmental disability through a positive interview process. Unlike other assessment tools, the SIS is strengths-based, focusing on the supports a person needs and not their deficits. The SIS covers 84 different categories of support needs. The assessment is completed with the individual and two people who know the individual well. The others involved could be a family member or a provider who has been working with the member. The goal is to have a reliable assessment that can provide the foundation for service planning. SIS assessment results are usually valid for three years unless there are significant changes in the member's condition or circumstances.

For persons newly entering ICF/IDs, the assessment will occur when there are qualified respondents who can participate in the interview. There must be at least two qualified respondents and no more than four. Requirements for being a respondent include:

- A consumer who is able to provide reliable answers.
- An individual who has known the person being evaluated for at least three months.
- An individual who has recently observed the person in one or more environments for substantial periods of time (case manager, parent/guardian, friend, staff, job-coach, teacher, self).

Telligen schedulers will contact facilities to arrange times for the assessments for persons who are currently receiving services. The scheduler will contact all participants and send information prior to the interview.

Facilities will be required to contact Telligen at 877-563-6972 to schedule interviews for persons newly entering the facility. The facility representative and Telligen scheduler will determine when qualified respondents will be available and when the interview can be scheduled.

Telligen is currently working with representative facility providers to design the best processes for completing the SIS face-to-face assessments. A Learning Session for facility staff and other interested stakeholders is planned through the Iowa Communications Network (ICN) on August 14, 2014. Please refer to the [ICN invitation](#)¹ for registration information. Participants must register with the ICN site of their choice by August 7, 2014.

The ICN will also be recorded and made available for later viewing. Topics for the learning sessions include:

- Scheduling the interview
- Overview of the SIS
- Participation by members, their representatives and facility staff
- Use of the SIS report in service planning

More information on the implementation of the SIS and the schedule for the CSA Learning Sessions for Stakeholders is available on the CSA section of the [Balancing Incentive Program \(BIP\) webpage](#)². Further information regarding the SIS can also be found in [Informational Letter 1392](#)³. Questions and inquiries can be submitted to CoreStandardizedAssessments@dhs.state.ia.us.

1

<https://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/ICF%20ID%20Implementation%20of%20the%20Supports%20Intensity%20Scale%20ICN%208-14-14.pdf>

² <http://dhs.iowa.gov/ime/about/initiatives/BIPP/CSA>

³ http://dhs.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/1392%20Supports%20Intensity%20Scale%20Assessments_0.pdf